

THE LITTLE AVIATION MUSEUM

Workbench notes

AIRBUS A.310S IN 1/144 BY REVELL

(October 2019)

Modelling 378

While Airbus were working on their first production, the A.300, some airlines asked them if they could make a version that could carry less passengers a longer distance. Studies began and the company decided to offer a shorter, lighter version with new wings which was initially called the A.300B-10 but was then redesignated the A.310. The longer range made it useful on the trans-Atlantic route so it was fairly popular. Between 1983 and 1998 a total of 255 A310s were produced, this relatively small number was due to the introduction of the A320/321 which could carry around the same number of passengers more efficiently. The A300 and A310 had enough in common that they were both made on the same production line and it took about a day for pilots to convert from one type to the other.



Air Niugini A.300 (rear) and A.310

Air Niugini ordered two A310s, construction numbers 378 and 549 which flew with the airline into the 2000s. At various times they had another two which flew with the airline for only short periods of time. Of these the more interesting is 378 which Air Niugini flew twice, the first time between January 1989 and April 1991 and then from November 1992 to September 2005, both times as P2-ANA. A little research shows that for the first year of that missing period this airliner flew with Compass Airlines as VH-YMI and after that airline closed it went off to Bulgaria where it flew for Jes Airlines for most of 1992, before returning to New Guinea. After it finished flying for Air Niugini it was converted to a freighter and flew for FedEx.

I knew none of this when I got around to making models of the A310. I had a couple of Revell kits and decals for the Compass and Air Niugini aircraft but did not realize that these two models would represent the same airliner at two different stages of its life. Somewhere along the line I acquired a PAS Decals Russian resin kit of the A310 and some FedEx freighter decals, not knowing that they might be useful too. Finally, at this year's Expo I picked up another Revell kit so cheaply that I could not pass it up.

Having made all the A300s I needed to make, it was time to make the A310. The Revell kit was first released in 1984 and had been reboxed many times in different liveries since then, but it wears its age fairly well. There is absolutely nothing remarkable or difficult about this kit, it goes together as well and easily as almost all Revell airliner kits. The kit I picked up at Expo this year turned out to be the first 1984 boxing and was nice and crisp whereas the other two were released in 1995 and were showing a bit of wear and some untidy flash here and there.

First off I made one of the 1995 boxings which went together fairly well with not too much need for filler, except for the flap tracks which had some rather intense shrinkage and needed a couple of goes to fill in. Painting for the Compass model was very simple with grey wings and white fuselage. The only difficult painting came with the engines which took eight different shades of grey, white and metallic to represent fairly well. I'm not quite sure what shape the nose undercarriage doors are supposed to be, but they don't look like that on the real airliner, so they needed a little modification. The Hawkeye decals were a pleasure to use and although the sheet



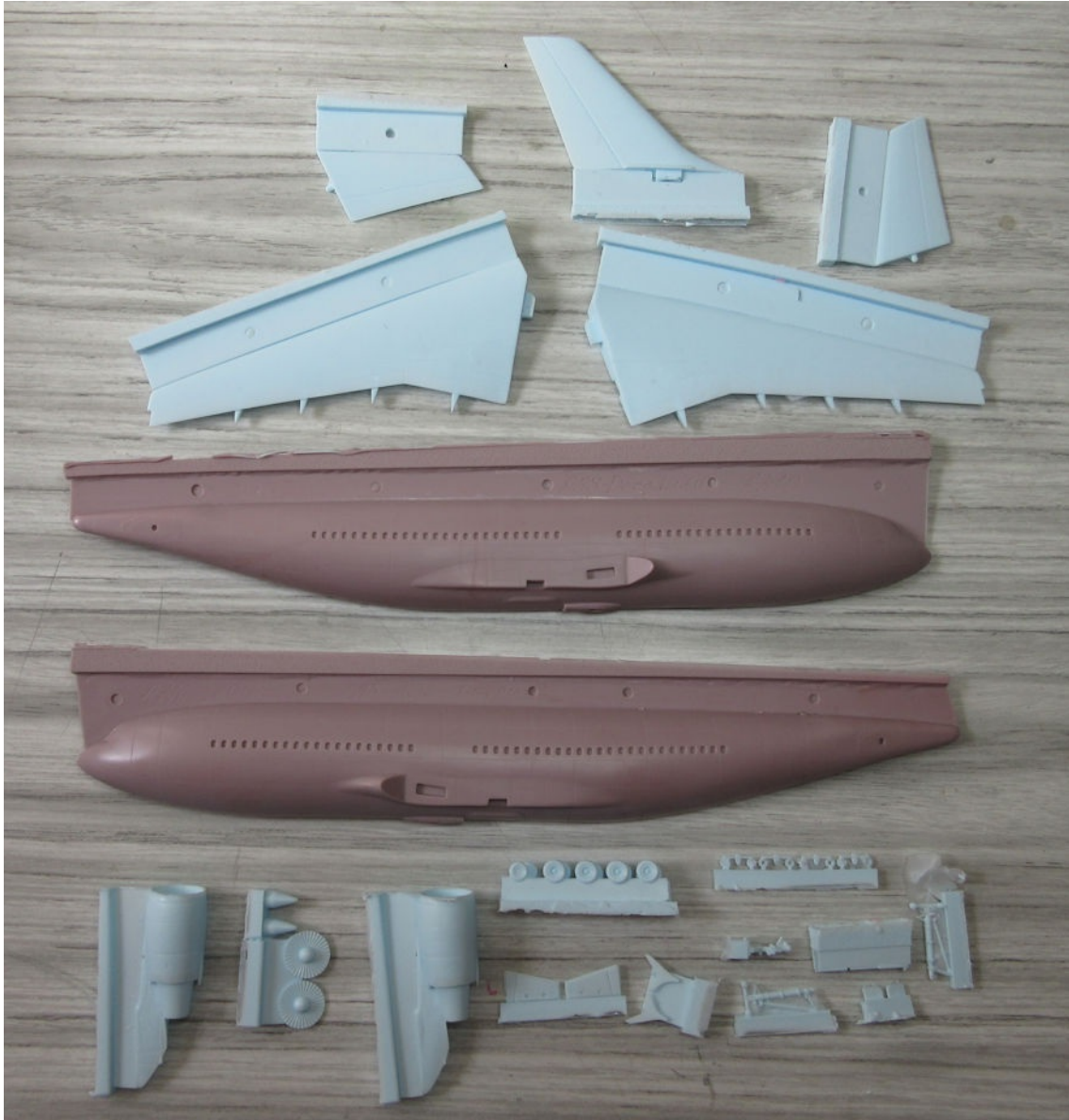
comes with its own corogard decals for the wings I used a Liveries Unlimited set which, to me at least, look more realistic.

Having completed that one I moved on to the second, this time using the earlier boxing. It is always nice to have a second go at a kit because you've learned all the little problems with the kit the first time around. So everything went smoothly until I realized that the earlier boxing was missing the wing end plates that are a prominent part of almost all A310s but where not, I guess, on the earliest ones. No worries, I thought, I'll just get out the other Revell kit and use the end plates as a guide to scratch build new endplates for this one. But when I opened the box of the other kit I found that the fuselage halves had been shattered beyond repair. I don't know how this happened but my guess is that it I may have bought it on ebay and the kit was smashed during transit. In any case, there were bits that were salvageable and they went into the spares box, while the end plates when onto this model. I had to do some work on the wing tips to make them fit, but it was not too difficult.

The painting was identical to that for the Compass model, understandably so since they were the same airliner. The Liveries Unlimited decals were okay but a touch on the fragile side in comparison to the Hawkeye decals used on the other model and needed some careful handling. This sheet makes the mistake that the Hawkeye decals for the TAA A300 makes in assuming that the cabin windows run in a straight line along the fuselage whereas, in reality, the cabin slopes up towards the rear of the fuselage, and so do the windows. Unlike the Hawkeye TAA decals, however, fixing this defect was not a problem and involved only cutting the decal sheet at the point three windows behind the over-wing door and then applying them separately sloping up towards the rear



door. (This would have worked without a hitch except that I went off to the kitchen to get something after I'd applied the windows to one side. I was only gone five minutes and when I came back the remaining decals had gone. I've already mentioned out new cats' propensity for nicking little bits and pieces, and that's what must have happened on this occasion although there were no cats to be seen anywhere when I returned. Fortunately, I try to make it a habit to scan decal sheets before using them, 'just in case' and on this occasion it was just such a case.)



PAS Decals 1/144 A.310 kit

‘So, what about the third version of 378?’ I hear you ask. ‘Still in its box.’ I reply. It’s been a tough and tiring year and I need to make something simple and easy at the moment rather than joining battle with this rather excellent looking resin kit and possibly stuffing it up. The kit and the decals are ready and waiting, I just have to wait until my mojo picks up the required amount of energy to match them. In the coming year, hopefully.

PS. It did get built, later.



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